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U.S. Congress. House. Committee on
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National cancer institute act

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75TH CONGRESS } HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES } REPORT
1st Session } No. 1281

U.S. Congress. House. Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce
" THE NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE ACT

JULY 21, 1937.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. BULWINKLE, from the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 7931]

The Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 7931) to provide for, foster, and aid in coordinating research relating to cancer, to establish the National Cancer Institute, and for other purposes, report it back to the House without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

The bill has been prepared after joint hearings held with the Committee on Commerce of the Senate, and after consideration of the following bills referred to your committee: A bill (H. R. 6100) entitled "A bill authorizing the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service to control and prevent the spread of the disease of cancer", introduced by Mr. Magnuson; a bill (H. R. 6767) entitled "A bill to promote research in the cause, prevention, and methods of diagnosis and treatment of cancer, to provide better facilities for the diagnosis and treatment of cancer, to establish a National Cancer Center in the Public Health Service, and for other purposes", introduced by Mr. Maverick; and a joint resolution (H. J. Res. 428) entitled "Joint resolution to provide for the establishment of a National Health Center as a permanent memorial to Thomas Jefferson, for the purpose of promoting research in the cause, prevention, and methods of diagnosis and treatment of cancer; to provide better facilities for the diagnosis and treatment of cancer; to establish a National Health Center in the Public Health Service; and for other purposes", introduced by Mr. Hunter.

These bills, although couched in slightly different language, attack the cancer problem facing the United States in much the same way and by the same methods. All the bills propose the establishment of a cancer center or department in the United States Public Health Service. They recognize the necessity of the promotion of research into the cause, prevention, or methods of diagnosis and treatment of

cancer by the Public Health Service and of making grants in aid to universities, hospitals, laboratories, or individuals also engaged in cancer research. They recognize the necessity for the United States Government to purchase radium which can be used for research purposes or for the treatment of the disease of cancer either by the Public Health Service or which may be loaned to institutions in the United States for study or treatment purposes.

The authors of these bills are to be commended for the careful, painstaking, and laborious efforts that they have expended in the study of the cancer problem and in the drafting of these bills. The committee does not by the introduction and reporting of a new bill wish to minimize in any way their efforts or to take from them any credit that they are entitled to for such efforts, but under the conditions arising, the committee feel that it is better to introduce a new bill, which is H. R. 7931.

The object of the reported bill (H. R. 7931) is to provide authority for a reasonable and scientific attack on the disease of cancer with the hope of assisting treatment centers with better means of curing the disease and by making adequate treatment more widely available to the people of the United States and by continuing research carried on by the Public Health Service and other institutions, public and private, to seek information as to the cause, prevention, and methods of diagnosis and treatment of cancer, to the end that this information may provide better means of attacking the problem in the future.

Some of the most eminent authorities in the United States who are engaged in the many fields of science which are attacking the cancer problem have supplied the committee with reliable statistics and other information as to the importance of cancer as a public health problem. The committee is convinced that cancer is one of the most urgent health problems of the Nation. There are more than 400,000 cases of the disease in the United States today. Cancer is the second most frequent cause of death; 140,000 people in the United States died of it in 1936. The increasing age of our population increases its importance as a health problem. In 1900 cancer caused 64 deaths per hundred thousand of the population. In the decade between 1900-10 there was a 57-percent increase in cancer deaths; in 1910-20, a 39-percent increase; in 1920-30, a 41-percent increase. With no change in the actual prevalence, the increasing population will result by 1960 in a 50-percent increase in the number of deaths from cancer.

Cancer is not only a public-health problem, but by reason of its chronicity and the long period of disability that it causes, it becomes an economic problem in at least 50 percent of the cases. Further, it appears that the attack rate of cancer is higher among the less privileged economic groups. Between the ages of 15 and 64 by occupational groups, taking the death rate among professional men as a base line of 100, the rate increases directly with other occupations until among unskilled workers the rate is 152. This comprises a great group of our population least able to bear the expense of diagnosis and treatment.

To meet this great health and economic problem the bill reported by the committee provides for a Cancer Institute in the Public Health Service, a National Cancer Advisory Council, the purchase of radium for use in research and for loaning to institutions for use in research, and in treatment; the acceptance of donations by the Secretary of the Treasury to carry on such projects; prescribes duties of the Surgeon

General, the Cancer Institute, and the Advisory Council in carrying out the provisions of the act; authorizes an appropriation of not to exceed \$750,000 for the construction of buildings and equipment for the Institute, and an annual appropriation of not to exceed \$700,000 to be used in carrying out the provisions of the act.

The bill establishes a National Cancer Institute as a division in the Public Health Service (sec. 1).

At the present time the Public Health Service is probably the largest investor in cancer research in the United States. The major portion of this research work is housed temporarily at the Harvard Medical School. This space must be vacated by that Service in 1 year to make room for the necessities of the medical school.

The establishment of such a Cancer Institute as a division of the Public Health Service will not only meet the need of housing the present cancer research of the Service but will provide facilities for expanding this research as is contemplated in other sections of this bill. Such an institute will be a central agency where facilities would be made available to competent scientists to carry on their work, and section 5 (c) provides for training facilities where instruction will be given in all technical matters relating to the study and the diagnosis and treatment of cancer.

The necessity for increasing the research work of the Public Health Service was strongly recommended by the witnesses which appeared before the committee. Excerpts from statements of such witnesses appear later in this report under the heading "Statements of witnesses."

The bill (sec. 3) authorizes the establishment of a National Advisory Cancer Council, similar to the present National Advisory Health Council of the Public Health Service, and prescribes the functions of the Council (sec. 4). The committee, while it recognizes the great value of the National Advisory Health Council as an aid to the Surgeon General in the general field of research, feels that it is of the utmost importance for the Surgeon General to have an advisory council to aid not only in planning the cancer research work of the Public Health Service, but, with the Surgeon General, to shoulder the responsibility of making grants-in-aid for research, passing on projects for research, passing on the acceptance of conditional gifts, and in collecting information as to studies being carried on in the United States or elsewhere in the world, including the examination of so-called cancer cures which have been foisted on the Nation.

The committee feels that the principle of grants-in-aid (secs. 4 (c) and 5 (e)) has a sound and substantial basis and is of the greatest assistance in stimulating and creating research in institutions outside of those of the Federal Government. The general plan in making these grants-in-aid is similar to that which has been practiced by the Medical Research Council of England for many years.

The bill provides for the purchase of radium (sec. 2 (c) and 5 (a)) which may be used by the Public Health Service for study and treatment purposes, and which can be loaned to credited institutions for the same purposes, and this is believed to be an essential part of any cancer-control program. The committee definitely feels that there are not enough diagnostic and treatment centers in the United States where patients may obtain adequate treatment. The purchase and lending of radium will not only raise the standard of treatment but will aid in providing additional cancer centers where adequate treatment can be obtained.

The bill provides training facilities (sec. 5 (c)) where scientists could be brought and given instruction either in methods of research or in methods of diagnosis and treatment. This seems to be essential to the full development of cancer control work.

The bill (sec. 6) authorizes the Secretary of the Treasury to accept gifts for the study, investigation, and research into the cause, prevention, and methods of diagnosis and treatment of cancer. Unconditional gifts may be accepted without question. Conditional gifts or those given for a specific purpose must bear the recommendation of the Surgeon General and the National Advisory Cancer Council, so that the Secretary will have the scientific advice of the Surgeon General and the council as to whether or not he should accept a gift for a specific purpose when such a purpose may or may not in their opinion be desirable for investigation.

The committee has given much consideration to the question as to the amounts of the authorizations of appropriations and as to the question of a single or continuing authorization. The committee believes there is no room for reasonable doubt that any attack on the cancer problem must be a long-range program, and that such a long-range program is the very heart of the structure upon which our future methods of the control of this disease must rest. The advantage of a continuing and long-range program in the attack on cancer are given by Mr. C. F. Kettering, the director of a great industrial laboratory financed out of the proceeds of business in a telegram appearing under the heading "Statements of witnesses."

The bill authorizes an appropriation of not to exceed \$750,000 (sec. 7 (a)) for the erection and equipment of buildings and facilities for the institute; and authorizes an annual appropriation of not to exceed \$700,000 (sec. 7 (b)), which is less than the amount (\$1,000,000) provided in both bills (H. R. 6100 and H. R. 6767) and the joint resolution (H. J. Res. 428). The committee is of the opinion that this annual amount will provide a sufficient sum to fully put into operation all of the provisions of the bill.

STATEMENTS OF WITNESSES

Dr. Little, managing director of the American Society for the Control of Cancer, pointed out clearly the necessity for laboratory research. Dr. Little said:

Let me point out that research in the cause of cancer is not entirely a medical problem in any sense of the word. The Research Association in Cancer has shown that in this country and abroad the vast majority of papers are not in any sense of the word medical; they trace back to biology, chemistry, and physics. The emphasis is entirely shifted from working with the slow, unsatisfactory, human material to the material that is easy to handle, rapid breeding, and conveniently controllable in the experimental laboratory. That has been the biggest change in cancer research.

Dr. Simpson, director of the New York State Institution for the Study of Malignant Disease at Buffalo, N. Y., said:

The bill before you is an indication that the people of this country are expecting help in the solution of this problem from the Federal Government. This bill will provide for new facilities—facilities now lacking. It will also give great impetus to the study of the entire cancer problem. I would urge you gentlemen to take favorable action upon this bill.

Dr. W. J. Mayo, one of the most outstanding and most beloved physicians in this country, in a letter to Mr. Magnuson wrote:

My brother, Dr. Charles H. Mayo, and I and our associates in the clinic are very glad that you have introduced this bill, the purpose of which is of greatest importance to the welfare of the people of this country and of the world. Too much cannot be said in favor of proper means and measures to learn the cause of cancer and to cure and prevent the disease.

Dr. Francis Carter Wood, Institute of Cancer Research, Columbia University, stated:

They are now doing cancer research in the Public Health Service, and they could spend \$300,000 more in equipment and salaries for workers to develop this work in the course of the year.

I think the Public Health Service ought also to have a cancer institute under its control.

Dr. Ludvig Hektoen, University of Chicago, testified as follows:

First, more and more adequately manned and adequately supported continuous research in the problems of cancer. Even if the solution of the fundamental problems of cancer proves to be as difficult as the solution of the problem of life itself, continued research will yield greater and greater results of practical benefit. We have learned more about cancer in all its aspects during the past 100 years, to make a general limitation, than in all preceding time, and never has advance been as promising and as encouraging as it is now.

Dr. G. Failla, of the Memorial Hospital of New York, a noted expert in the field of physics, and Dr. M. H. Tuve, Carnegie Institution, Washington, whose contributions in the field of physics have been outstanding, testified as to the importance of continuing research in physics as being a field of science bearing on the cancer problem. Dr. Failla stated:

I would consider radiological research as very important. By radiological research I mean the effects of radium and X-rays, and the physical characteristics of those rays, and so on, for which there is an immediate need in the treatment of cancer by X-ray and radium today. The application of those agents would be improved very much if we had more available information. It simply requires time and money to obtain it.

Dr. Tuve said:

If I have any remark to make, after listening to the testimony before this committee, it is that in line with the observations that I have made during the past 10 years, working close to the side lines of cancer research, and very closely associated with men who are concerned intimately with that subject, the remarks made by the members of the committee come very close to summarizing the opinions which are general and agreed upon among medical men, namely, that the problem of cancer, in the first place, is a long continuing one, and that the problem is primarily not one of furnishing more services of the type we have now, but of obtaining more exact information about cancer.

* * * * *

As I see it, associated with physics of course, any cancer research should have biology, pathology, and clinical research. Those are certainly important. You have biochemistry and biophysics, including an investigation into the kind of things that might or might not supplant or assist the existing radium and X-ray treatments such as are used, including an investigation of the possibilities of those things which have been hardly looked at for lack of funds. Contrary to some of the remarks made here, there are simply not funds enough to even begin to investigate some of the things that are waiting to be studied.

Sir Lenthal Cheate, F. R. C. S., stated:

There is an urgent need of expert clinical men in the uses of radium and X-rays in the treatment of cancer and also in the education by these men of others who intend to devote themselves to this branch of practice.

Dr. Failla testified as follows:

Another point is that there are not enough men today properly trained or properly qualified to conduct such a research. So I would suggest that one of the important things to do in the first few years would be to have a trained personnel. Appoint a number of men to go to different institutes and spend 1 or 2 or 3 years there and study one particular phase of the work. In one place have radio-physics; in another place have chemistry, and so on. In that way we will accumulate a nucleus of experts who will then form an institute here in Washington.

Dr. Cutler said:

A recent study of this question indicates that if every patient suffering from cancer in the United States could be given the benefit of the most modern and skilled methods of treatment the increased curability over present conditions would result in a saving of at least 25,000 lives annually.

[Telegram]

DETROIT, MICH., *July 6, 1937.*

Senator ROYAL S. COPELAND,

*Commerce Committee, United States Senate Building,
Washington, D. C.*

As I wired you this morning, it is impossible for me to be in Washington owing to an important engineering meeting here in Detroit. Had I been able to appear before your committee two points would have been stressed. First, the remarkable progress which has been made in the field of industrial research has been due to having a definite objective and never losing sight of it regardless of the innumerable failures. A definite general plan as to procedure but the detailed methods will change from day to day as new information is available. The solution of the problem is of infinitely greater importance than the method. Second, in my opinion the same coordination of research in medical fields under competent leadership will produce exactly the same type of results as it has in industry provided we have a definite objective and stay with it regardless of the time required. I am perfectly sure that an organized research following these methods for solving such health and medical problems as cancer is of the greatest importance not only to the medical profession but to every citizen in the country. I think these fundamental considerations are met by the bills before your committee.

C. F. KETTERING.



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